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ERROR DETECTED,
AND
FICTION REBUKED: *Ma*

IN A LETTER TO
EDWARD TATHAM, D. D. *so called,*
and Rector of Lincoln-College, Oxford.

ON HIS
SERMON, 1st Epistle John iv.

*Which (for its Excellence) was read in four
Parish Worship-Houses, in the Year 1792, and
published under the Title of "A Sermon
" fuitable to the Times. "*

By THEOPHILUS HADDOCK *K*

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ERROR DETECTED, &c.

EDWARD TATHAM,

THY sermon on "Try the spirits, &c." came not to my hand till lately, and then I perused it hoping that as thou fillest so high a station as an instructor of others for the priesthood, it would have furnished me with some edifying knowledge, as the text contains such excellent advice; but being disappointed in my expectation, I thought it neither an uncivil or unkind employ, to communicate some things that have occurred to my mind upon reading it. I see the drift is to justify Episcopacy, and to render other ministers as intruders and invalid, which appears to me to be by no means proved; but as thou acknowledgest the scriptures to be the source from whence thy authority for such doctrine is derived, I trust I shall be able, from that holy book, to prove thou art very much in error in thy judgment and conclusions; for the very early part of it instructs

structs us, that there were worshippers when there was no priest: and I believe there will be again, and that acceptable, as well as unacceptable: nor do I believe they were self-taught, nor was their father before them, but had an higher instructor than the most dignified collegian that ever the world produced.

I am glad thou hast chose the sacred scriptures for thy authorities for endeavouring to establish thy principles, because I shall take the same to prove how very much thou erreſt in thy discourse, from their sacred information, instruction, and doctrine: for they tell us that God by his spirit instructed common artificers in their trade, even to work in blue, scarlet, &c. It was God that instructed Noah that the earth was corrupt, and that all flesh had corrupted their ways before him; but, for all this, his sagacity could not have devised and constructed the ark, for the preservation of himself and family, had not Divine Wisdom instructed him. Abraham, I believe, would not have thought that the life of his son would have been an acceptable offering, had not the communication been immediately from the Divine Source. Moses would have known nothing of the time or manner of the redemption of the children of Israel out of Egypt, nor that he was to be the instrument to effect it, had not Divine Communication been the channel by which he received it; nor could he by any other means have

have come to the knowledge that a tabernacle was to be built, how constructed, the worship in it performed, or which tribe it was the divine purpose to elect to be priests and ministers of it. And thou mayest remember, that though they were of and by the immediate appointment of the Most High, two of them lost their lives by their presumption, in offering strange fire before the Lord: and I have often thought this ought to be a lesson of awful instruction to all that speak in his name, whether in the establishment, or under any other denomination; for as no man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of a man that is in him—so no man knoweth the things of God, but by the spirit of God.—Please to read the second chapter of Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians. How presumptuous, therefore, must it be for any to speak in His name, with any authority or qualification less than this!

But to proceed: All the wisdom and policy of men could never have devised the Urim and Thummim; and much less have given it the power of communicating light and knowledge with respect to outward events and occurrences: then how much inferior must they be for giving light and knowledge of divine things, but as themselves are immediately instructed from the source of all knowledge both natural and divine. Had Moses compounded the holy anointing oil for the priest's office, without divine direction, conceivest

conceivest thou that it would have been an acceptable service in him? I conclude that neither thou, nor any other rational man, can believe any such thing; and yet how many men are there that take upon them the very office of the priesthood, by a practice which I am persuaded is much more presumptuous than it would have been in him only to have made the oil—though I am of the judgment that if he had, the query proposed to some under his dispensation, would with holy indignation have been addressed to him, “Who hath required this at thy hand?”

We may observe, that though Divine Mercy had minutely given direction about the tabernacle, and all it's services, the priests soon corrupted the ordinances of God and chose their own ways. Eli, the high-priest, because he did not restrain his sons and punish their villainy, and other his practices in the mal-administration of the law, died of a broken neck; and his two sons, who were both priests, for their wickedness in that they oppressed the people and violated the ordinances of the Most High, lost their lives in battle. Now I would have all priests and ministers of every denomination take solemn warning by these, and remember that though they could boast a divinely legal ordination, that was no protection to secure them from the hand of Divine Justice for dishonouring him before the people: and if that ordination and qualification, which was of his own appointment

ment, was no protection to them in their iniquity, I would have others that have but a spurious one of men's devising, awfully consider that he is a jealous God, and will not give his glory to another, or his praise to graven images or the religious devices of men's invention.

I think the first political priest that we read of, who was of a king's making, was Amaziah, priest of Bethel, or Jeroboam's chapel, or calf-house; and this stimulated him with such consequence as to forbid the Lord's prophet to declare his message, his priestly authority qualifying him so to act, as the other was but a poor shepherd and a gatherer of sycamore fruit. I have thought that political establishments, in all countries, have derived their authority from no higher source than Amaziah did his, 1 Kings xii. 25—33. which was from Jeroboam, an usurper; for the kings of the Lord's appointment that were before him left the business of the tabernacle and priests to the immediate direction of Him who to the present time remains the alone head of the church, declaring Himself under a figure to be the Vine, and his church the branches; and that as the branch could not bear fruit of itself except it abode in the vine, neither could his church except it abode in Him, John xv. 4, 5, 6, 7. When thou hast by experience learnt the efficacy of this doctrine in thy own heart, I know thy teaching, if thou art called to teach at all, will be very different from what thy

“ Sermon

“ Sermon suitable to the Times” holds out ; and therefore I shall just take the liberty to animadvert on some passages in it, I hope with christian charity and invariable truth, as that is the standard we should all walk by in love ; for without it we cannot possibly be Christ’s disciples.

And now first give me leave to say, thy quotation and doctrine contradict each other. In page 1, thou quotest Paul’s exhortation to prove all things, and hold fast that which is good ; and yet in pages 8 and 9, thou art so far from allowing that liberty, that thou art pressing all into a persuasion that men instructed in the sciences at universities, are the only persons that can point out the way of salvation clearly to them. Thou indeed admittest that those that hear them have a right to judge of their doctrine, but perhaps wast not well aware of what follows from this admission, which is this, it supposeth that there is a principle of religious knowledge implanted in the human mind, that is capable of judging of truth and error ; and this is a just supposition, for so there really is : and that the apostle whose words thou hast chosen for thy text well knew, and therefore instructed the primitive, and all true christians, even to the end of the world, to attend to its teaching, and not to the antichrists that then were, now are, or ever will be in the world ; for he told them they had an unction from the Holy One, and knew all things ; and that he had not written to them because they
knew

knew not the truth, but because they knew it, and that no lie was of it. And his brother Peter declared that no prophecy of the scripture was of any private interpretation, and that holy men of God spoke then as they were moved of the Holy Ghost: and the anointing or unction of which John spake, is given to all men, that they may know as much of them as concerns their salvation.

But thy query in page 4 smells so strong of that antichristian spirit, which was gone out from the apostle's doctrine, that I think it needful to press it upon the minds of all that are in good earnest for their salvation, to practise that which thy text so wisely recommends, and to try thy spirit by thy doctrine, and let the holy scriptures be the judge, and then I am persuaded they will find thine to be of the very nature which John cautioned the Christian converts against believing or receiving. The query hinted at above runs thus, "In matters of such deep concern and difficult enquiry, how are all men able to judge for themselves?" Why I will tell thee how they are able, or may be enabled, and that is, not to mock God with vain words, Ephesians v. 6. but humbly to wait for that which the church, whereof thou art a member, hath prescribed in a prayer in which supplication is made for attaining of it; and that is the collect which she hath appointed to be read three days successively, at the time that popery hath

hath invented for her to call Whitsuntide, and runs in the following words, viz. "God who
 "at this time didst teach the hearts of thy faith-
 "ful people, by sending them the light of thy
 "Holy Spirit, grant us by the same spirit to
 "have a right judgment in all things, and ever-
 "more to rejoice in its holy comfort, through
 "the merits of Christ Jesus our Saviour, who
 "liveth and reigneth with thee, in the unity of
 "the same spirit, one God, world without end,
 "Amen." And so say I; for that rightly or-
 dained and dignified minister of the gospel of
 Christ, Paul, hath told us, and I believe that
 there is no rational mind that doth not experi-
 ence the truth of it; that a measure and mani-
 festation of the spirit is given to every man to
 profit withal, so that a minister made by the
 same power that Paul was, could never pro-
 pound a question of so Antichristian a nature,
 to raise such a doctrine from, that people must
 be dependent upon men for the knowledge of
 the way of salvation, that have studied and
 learnt the liberal arts, to explain what that way
 was, when Carpenters, Upholsterers, and Fish-
 ermen have declared it more clearly, perfectly,
 and emphatically, than any man instructed into
 it, after the wisdom of this world, ever did or
 could: "for not many wise, not many mighty,
 "not many noble, are called; for God hath
 "chosen the foolish things of this world to con-
 "found the wise, that no flesh may glory in his
 "presence." Therefore they that profess them-
 selves

selves Christ's ministers, should never glory, nor lie against the truth as it is in him, and revealed in the scriptures with indubitable certainty, through faith that is in Christ Jesus, as the gift of God, and not in the principles and doctrines of men, that are as to the true and genuine faith of Christ, reprobate; as all must be that teach that salvation is attainable in no other way than as the humanly ordained men may and do explain it. Oh! horrid delusion! for the lip of truth hath declared that "this is life eternal, to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent:" and that "no man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him;" so that this knowledge and attainment is by divine revelation, and not human information.

Having now practised thy advice, and tried thy spirit by the holy scriptures, and finding it to be opposite both to the apostle's and Christ's, I think thou canst not suppose it the least unjust conclusion, to say, that it clearly appears to be the very Antichrist that the apostle cautioned the people of his time against, as that through the divine unction they knew all things, and that he did not write to instruct them in the knowledge of the truth, but to advise them to keep in the truth, and attend to it's holy instructions and monitions; that the antichrists that were then in the world might not deceive them out of their souls, and money, as his gracious Lord had enjoined him

him and all his apostles and ministers in the work of the gospel, as they had freely received the gospel from him, viz. the power of God to minister, so they should freely, without money, and without price, impart it to the people: and here the prophet Isaiah's allusion to the gospel dispensation is clearly fulfilled, chap. lv. Please to read the whole of it; for my humble desire is that Divine Wisdom may open thy eyes and heart to see how blind thou art to the spirituality of the gospel of Christ. And I am the more concerned for thy illumination, as that to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Thy whole chain of reasoning on the subject of the necessity of people's being taught by men in the things of God, runs in full contradiction to the declaration of the God of Truth; for he hath declared that the people should all know him from the greatest to the least, and they should not need say every man to his neighbour and brother, Know the Lord: and this is a prophecy pointing to the dispensation of time in which God was not to be worshipped in ceremonies and carnal ordinances, but in spirit and in truth.

Under the law the priest's lips were to keep knowledge, and the people were to seek the explanation of the law from his mouth, as he was indeed by divine appointment to be the Messenger of the Lord of Hosts; but all the legal things in divine worship are done away in Christ,

nor are there any acceptable worshippers of the Father in this day, but such that worship him in spirit and in truth; for such, said our blessed Saviour, the Father seeks to worship him. The wisdom of this world is declared to be foolishness with God; therefore I am persuaded that all the wisdom and knowledge that this world can furnish a man with, cannot make him a minister of the gospel, nor one whit more qualify him to judge of the truths of the gospel of Christ, nor in any degree so much as the most illiterate mechanic that hath been obedient to the teachings of the grace of God which bringeth salvation in and to his own heart. Please to read the five last verses of Paul's second chapter to Titus; for there he says, "The grace of God that bringeth salvation, appears to all men, and also teacheth them to deny ungodliness, the world's lusts," &c. a doctrine which by no means compares with thine in page 5, which speaks of greater opportunities to know, and better qualifications to judge in things which the Scripture says the way-faring man, though a fool, cannot err in. I agree with thee that the information of the wisest is not infallible, when they attain their wisdom in the things of God only from beneath, at schools and colleges, by human arts, learning, &c. But when any possess that wisdom that is from above, and are actuated by it, such act and speak with infallible certainty.

If the Doctors in Divinity, so called, know no more of the means of our salvation than thou hast described of it in page 5 and 18, I think it is a pity that there are any; for the people, I believe, would then be more dependent on Him that is able and willing to save, even to the very uttermost, of free mercy, without fee or tythes: for in opposition to thy assertion I testify, that salvation is the gift of God, and on our parts it requires information that is direct, conviction that is immediate, and the first degree of knowledge; that it can never grow out of second-hand information, nor is weak conviction its proper soil, nor can the heart of a believer be pure, but by virtue of that salvation which well-disposeth it to bring forth the fruits of that salvation which we have by Christ Jesus, in the accomplishment of the angel's declaration, when he told his father that he should save his people from their sins, Matthew i. 21. So that our salvation is of the Lord, and not by a second-hand information. I have often thought, and am more and more confirmed in my judgment, that the reason why there is so little religion in the world is, because there is so much preaching in it by men of corrupt minds, and as touching the faith reprobates. I have sometimes admired that the fate of some of these is not the same as was the sons of Sceva, as their conduct has some correspondency. Please to read from the 13th to the 21st verse of the xixth chapter of Acts.

I am

I am glad thou subscribest to fallibility, for thy sermon evinceth it to be the case. I am sure I feel nothing but love and good-will to thee in my heart, though I thus write; for thy immortal soul is of great value, and therefore I would have thee seek in the humility and simplicity of a little child to him whom God hath given for a light to enlighten the Gentiles, and for salvation to the ends of the earth; that thou mayest know him to be so to thee: for there is no other name, that is power, under heaven, whereby thou canst be saved.

I should be glad to stop here; but my heart seems full of love, both to thee and all mankind; therefore thou must excuse my proceeding a little farther in the matter before me, as it is of eternal consequence to thee and all men, experimentally to know that Christ is the way, the truth, and the life; and that no man cometh to the father, but by him: and that in matters of the last importance to their salvation they must neither depend on the abilities nor integrity of others; for the call of God is, "Look unto me, all ye ends of the earth, and be saved," Isaiah xlv. 22. Paul's learning did not make him a minister of the gospel, but a persecutor of it, and its adherents; but when by the revelation of the Spirit of God, he was ordained a minister of it, he told the Corinthians to try themselves, and prove themselves, as they would by that means know for themselves that Jesus Christ was in

B 2
them,

them, except they were reprobates : that was by his light and spirit to teach and instruct them and us, as he farther wrote, that what was to be known of God was manifest in man, for that a manifestation of the spirit was given to every man to profit withal, 1 Cor. xii. 7, 11—13; and this is what he as a true and real doctor in divinity, not a surreptitious one, recommended his patients to; well knowing that nothing short of it could do their souls essential good; therefore he would not take their money nor tythes, Acts xx. 33; but directed them to Him that hath all power to save, and freely dispenseth his saving help to all that will lay hold of it; and they experience saving health in and by it, nor is salvation in any other.

I did not read thy sermon with any view of remarking on it, after this manner; but having seen JAMES HINTON's reply to it, I thought it unjust to give any judgment for or against either, till I had seen both; but as I read thy pages, I admired at the openings that arose in my mind, pointing out the fallacies they contain. In page 6 thou transferrest the antichristian principles and practices from thyself and brethren to other societies of people, and dubbest them with the epithet of agents and evil spirits, under different forms and impositions; but I trust I have clearly proved above that thy doctrine bears no similitude to the doctrine the apostle advanceth in the chapter of which thy text is a part.

part. I would have thee read the whole chapter with deep attention, and reverently ponder the six first verses; for I can in truth say my spirit very fervently desireth that divine illumination may quicken thee to see how much thou erreſt, both in principle and doctrine, from the ſpirit of that chapter; and indeed I may ſay from the whole tenor of Scripture. I cannot ſay that the ſchools of the prophets that we read of in the Old Teſtament were eſtabliſhed for the education of men to officiate in the prieſt's office at Jeroboam's idolatrous worſhip; but I believe they were, as we read 1 Kings xii. 31, that he made an houſe of high places, which correſponds very much with the colleges built by the Papiſts under the goſpel diſpenſation; and he made prieſts which were not of the ſons of Levi, and ſo did they of men that were not of the Lord's choice: ſo that the firſt and laſt degeneracy affi- milate exactly one with the other, and both op- poſed the divine order; as there was no occa- ſion for ſuch places to inſtruct the Lord's prieſts, he having given full direction himſelf how he would have the ſervice of the tabernacle and temple conducted: but when ſtate policy re- quired that the prieſts ſhould have ſome ſhare in the government, it became neceſſary to have ſuch places eſtabliſhed for their inſtruction into the nature and ſecrets of ſtate policy; as thoſe which were the Lord's faithful prieſts could not deviate from his ſtatutes to obtain any church preferments; and as it was neceſſary that Jero-

boam should have some in whose eyes a good living and the king's favour was of more value than the salvation of the people; these seminaries were devised for their tuition, that they may the more effectually deceive the people, with a specious shew of temporal consequence, into that idolatry which became to the people of Israel a sin; which was productive of the greatest evils and most afflicting suffering that they ever experienced: it brought upon them sword, pestilence, famine, and captivity, again and again; as their foolish hearts were so wedded to the pompous shew of these idolatrous priests, when dressed in their mitres, croziers, cowls, tippetts, hoods, cassocks, gowns, surplices, bands, &c. that they departed from the Lord: and that which drew their hearts away from the true worship of God, the same draws away the hearts of carnal people from the worshipping of God in spirit and truth unto the present day. It was necessary that Jeroboam should have some such as these, as the Lord's faithful priests could not conform to his idolatrous worship: we do not read that there were any schools established by divine appointment for the education of either priests or ministers, under the legal or gospel dispensation; therefore it may with strict propriety be concluded, that the universities in the present time had their original rise from the schools where the priests and prophets that fed at Jezebel's table had their education.

In

In pages 6 and 7 thou speakest of some who by the introduction of lies and heresies have corrupted the christian faith; but how much of that thou hast practised in thy sermon before me I shall leave with others to determine, who have known what the way and work of real salvation is. I much approve of thy dislike of the doctrines and inventions of men being imposed on the people as gospel and Christian; for indeed they are but real antichrists, and I would therefore ask thee who invented the Common-Prayer-Book, as that is an invention contrary to the apostle's direction, which was to pray with the spirit and with the understanding also; but he gave no direction to pray with the book, which false priests, and false christians can do, but true ministers and true christians stand in no need of it, because they are instructed what is the mind of the spirit, which maketh intercession for them according to the will of God, Rom. viii. 26, 27, and not the will of man; for the will of man, no more than the wrath of man, worketh the righteousness of God; "For it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth; but it is God that worketh in us both to will and to do of his own good pleasure." It is true that faith cometh by hearing, and also as true that real, profitable, and eternally efficacious hearing, cometh by the word of God; and therefore the eleventh commandment, if we join it to the ten given to Moses, or the first commandment in the New Testament, was, "This is my be-
"loved

“loved Son in whom I am well pleased; hear ye
 “him;” Matthew xvii. 5: and this is the
 word of eternal life, if the apostles and primi-
 tive ministers knew what the word of saving
 faith and eternal life was, as thou mayest see in
 Rom. x. 8: “But what saith it, the word is nigh
 “thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart—
 “that is the word of faith which we preach :”
 &c. and in Gal. i. 8, he says, “If any man
 “preach any other gospel than that we have
 “preached, let him be accursed :” and in
 speaking of what the gospel was, declared it to
 be the power of God unto salvation; and this
 must be Christ, as all power both in heaven and
 in earth is given unto him, nor is there salva-
 tion in any other; and from whose convicting
 power in the heart none can flee, no more than
 Adam after his transgression could flee from the
 Divine presence and hide himself from his
 judgments.

If they whose words thou hast perverted to
 make a trade of, had any knowledge from
 whence salvation was, and from whom received,
 as thou mayest see, John vi. 68, where they said,
 “Lord, whither shall we go, for thou hast the
 “words of eternal life;” and David said, ad-
 dressing himself to the Most High, “Thy word
 “have I hid in my heart, that I may not sin
 “against thee,” Psalm cxix. 11. and by hearing
 and regarding that word which brought him
 faith, not of mens making, but God’s gift, he
 had

had this evidence; and therefore declared of it, that others may wisely imitate his example, Psalm cxix. 99—104. “I have more understanding than all my teachers, for thy testimonies are my meditations.” The word which God commanded all men to hear, was the word which took flesh and dwelt amongst men for a season; which word is gone forth into all the world, even to the ends of the earth; nor is there speech or language where it is not heard, nor is there any other word that can inspire our minds with divine faith, in Him in whom alone salvation is, and not in any other; so that the abilities and integrity of the teachers of whom thou speakest are totally insufficient for this thing, though they may be deep proficients in Aristotle’s logic, and that philosophy and vain deceit which is after the rudiments of the world, the traditions of men, and not after Christ, Colos. ii. 8.

I shall begin my remarks on thy 8th page, with that pertinent query, Job. xi. 7. “Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection?” I conclude thy modesty will answer, No. Then I would say, How canst thou pretend to teach Him, and his will, whom thou canst not find out? Must not this be presumption of a most flagrant degree, and deception of an abominable magnitude! Excuse my freedom, for it seems to me that thy soul is at stake; and my desire is to awaken it to a holy dependence on the arm of
 Divine

Divine sufficiency; for our sufficiency is not of ourselves but of Him, 2 Corinth. iii. 5, 6. The prophet, under the legal dispensation, called on the people "to cease from man, whose breath "is in his nostrils; for," said he, "wherein is he "to be accounted of:" and more than that, for, "Cursed," said he, "is man that trusteth in "man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose "heart is departed from the Lord; he shall be "like the heath in the desert, that knoweth not "when good cometh," Jeremiah xvii. 5, 6, 7, 8.

I have no pleasure in writing this, save that which ariseth from a consciousness of doing that which I believe is the divine will in it; as the openings are such in my mind while I am writing, that I am persuaded it is from him; for the cloathing with which my mind is covered is that love which desires the salvation of all men as my own. In page 9, thou speakest of universities as being places of learning, for the regular qualification and due authority for the ministry, and for supplying the body of the clergy, according to forms, and offices that are purely scriptural; in which I conceive thou hast exceeded the bounds of truth; for in the scriptures I cannot find any one thing that countenances the practices of the universities, from the first admission of a student, to the inducting him into a parochial, or some other living; except thou allow them and Jeroboam's schools to be on the same foundation; but I find many things in the
scriptures

scriptures which fully contradict the practices of
 the universities: but as they were built at a time
 when ignorance was the mother of devotion, and
 the laity were not allowed to read the scriptures,
 it is no wonder that practices so contrary to
 them were fallen in with, as the corrupt clergy
 of that time instructed the people to believe that
 by such acts they may purchase absolution for
 their own souls and their friends. O horrid
 delusion! which makes me admire that men pro-
 fessing to be more enlightened, still support fa-
 bricks which were built on such a corrupt foun-
 dation; or that people will suffer themselves to
 be so beguiled, as to think that human learning
 and human ordination can make a man a minister
 of the gospel of Christ, when the sacred decla-
 ration of the Apostles is, "That no man taketh
 "this honour upon himself, but he that is called
 "of God as was Aaron," Hebrews v. 4: so that
 it is not university education, or ordination,
 that makes men ministers of the gospel, but the
 call and ordination of God only; and Paul,
 from his own experience, declares that he re-
 ceived not his ministry of man, neither was he
 taught it, but by the Revelation of Jesus Christ;
 nor did he go to the apostles for ordination,
 but went into Arabia, and from thence returned
 to Damascus, so that he was an itinerant preacher,
 with a witness; yet no whit behind the chiefest
 of the apostles: but it is no wonder that men
 that do not receive their ministry in the way he
 did his, have not unity with his practices; for
 light

light and darkness, letter and spirit, have no fellowship; as one killeth, the other giveth life. Paul could not preach Christ, till he had him first revealed in him; for the learning he had acquired in the school of Gamaliel, was no qualification for gospel ministry, though it was sufficient to make him very mad against the itinerant preachers of that time: but when he became one himself, and had no rectorial preferment, he could then declare he was not so. "I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak forth the words of truth and soberness:" and when he was brought to this state he accounted his learning but as dross and dung compared to the excellency of the knowledge he had received in the Revelation of Christ Jesus his Lord; for by it he was instructed that without it he could do nothing; but through it strengthening him, he could do all things. Philippians, iv. 13.

Page 10 thou tellest thy audience, of necessity they must be taught by some; but how flatly this contradicts God himself in that holy book which thou professest thy rule to walk by, Isaiah liv. 13, "And all thy children shall be taught by the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children:" and John vi. 45, "It is written in the Prophets, and they shall all be taught of God; every man, therefore that hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." Isaiah xlviii. 17, "Thus saith the Lord thy Redeemer, the Holy

“ Holy One of Israel, I am the Lord thy God
 “ that teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth
 “ thee by the way that thou shouldest go.”

Verse 18, “ Oh that thou hadst harkened to my
 “ counsel, then had thy peace been as a river,
 “ and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea.”

Now the reason why they did not hearken unto his counsel was, because the priests were corrupt, and corrupted the people; for this same prophet complains in the Lord's name as follows, “ Oh my people, they that lead thee
 “ cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy
 “ paths.” And the Lord seeing the wickedness and degeneracy of the priests, graciously promised to teach the people himself, and not leave them to the instruction of men of corrupt minds, and as touching the faith, reprobates, that preach for hire, and divine for money, and teach for doctrine the traditions of men, things which they ought not for filthy lucre's sake. Micah iii. 11, 12, “ The priests there-
 “ of teach for hire, the prophets thereof divine
 “ for money, yet will they lean upon the Lord,
 “ and say, Is not the Lord amongst us? no evil
 “ can come upon us:” verse 12, “ Therefore shall
 “ Zion for your sakes be ploughed as a field, and
 “ Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the moun-
 “ tain of the house, as the high places of the fo-
 “ rest.” Now the priest's sin here complained of was teaching for hire, and the prophets that of divining for money; but men of this sort

must preach to please the people, or else they will not pay them for it, where they are not by popish laws compell'd to it; but how contrary is this to the practice of the true ministers of the gospel, "Do I then," said Paul, "seek to please men or God; if I yet seek to please men, then should I not be the servant of Christ." And in John xiv. 26, we read, "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom my Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." And this is confirmed by the beloved disciple, in the epistle of which the text is a part, chapter ii. verse 20. "But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things." But I must refer thee to the two proceeding verses for a portrait of thyself; they run thus, "Little children, it is the last time, and as ye have heard that Antichrist shall come, even now there are many Antichrists, whereby we know that it is the last time; they went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us; but they went out, that they may be made manifest that they were not of us:" as Jeroboam and his scholars, though they were Jews, manifested themselves not to be true worshippers of God, but went out from them into idolatry for the sake of lucre. Now I draw this character or complexion of antichrist from the disagreement of his doctrine and thine; his was
 that

that Christians had an unction from the Holy One, by which they knew all things necessary for their salvation, in this world: thy doctrine is, that Christians must be taught the things concerning their salvation by learned men; but that saying of our Lord's comes strong into my mind, "Ye fools and blind, whether is greater the temple, or the altar that sanctifieth the temple?" He that readeth, let him also understand; it was learned men that did not know our blessed Saviour, but wrote an inscription in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin deridingly, acknowledging him to be king of the Jews, but could not by their learning see him to be what he was, The Lord of Life and Glory. And the same wise, learned, and carnal spirit is writing over him now in the same language, their sufficiency as superior to every other thing to give the knowledge of him, in this day: but this eternal truth will stand over it for ever, that "No man knoweth the Father, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him." And by this the poor illiterate fishermen were better acquainted with the mysteries of the kingdom of God, than the wise and learned Rabbies amongst the Jews. Nor did the learned Saul, the Upholsterer or Tent-maker, know them, till he counted his learning dross and dung in comparison of it. "Art thou," said our Lord to Nicodemus, "a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?" and now I would say to EDWARD, a teacher in Oxford, Art thou a master in Oxford, and

knowest not these things? Thy Sermon declares this to be the case: and now I may tell thee that my very heart fervently prays for thee, as the prophet did for his servant, 2 Kings vi. 17. "Lord "I pray thee open his eyes." Thou wishedst that the people of Oxford would do themselves the justice of trying you by the same rule that mechanicks abilities are tried; but if they did, I think they would be as blind as those blind leaders of the blind, which our Lord said should both fall into the ditch; for their imaginations must be very dark, which cannot see the different source from which spiritual and natural knowledge is derived, the one by study, practice, and labour in the several arts that they would acquire; but the other is the immediate gift of God; and whoever is unacquainted with this truth, the same cannot possibly be a steward of the mysteries of God, however they may delude themselves with the idea, as Saul did; but when it pleased God who separated him from his mother's womb, to call him by his grace, to reveal his Son in him, that he should preach him amongst the Gentiles, he forthwith conferred not with flesh and blood; neither went he to Oxford, Cambridge, Edinburgh, or Aberdeen, for ordination; his authority and qualification being higher than any fallen creature could confer upon him; nor can the mystery of God, or true qualification for the ministry of his gospel, be attained by all the study, or learning, in the world, for it is only as he is pleased to
open

open and reveal them in the souls of those that he makes, by the baptizing virtue of his own immediate power, fit vessels to be put into the ministry, 1 Tim. i. 12. "And I thank Christ
 "Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that
 "he counted me faithful, putting me into the
 "ministry."

This is a doctrine that the wisdom of this world hath antiquated, and so opposeth it; but if immediate Revelation is ceased, salvation is also ceased, for Christ himself hath declared, "That no man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him;" and that eternal life consists in our knowing of God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent. When parting with the apostles he told them to go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for that he would be with them alway, even to the end of the world; and this was necessary, as without his power and presence they could not do it; for he had told them before that without him they could do nothing; that is, with regard to his glory, or increase of his spiritual kingdom, because the things of it are as the nature of it is, pure and eternal. Elementary things are in the power of men to use and to disuse as they please, but "the things of God knoweth no man, save the spirit of God," 1 Cor. ii. 11. "and they to whom he is pleased to reveal them." Now ministers of mens making

ing can sprinkle or dip in water, but this is not Holy Ghost and fire baptism; nor is it in the power of any mere man to effect it, which our Lord well knew, and therefore promised his ministers his gracious and omnipotent presence, to aid them in this work; nor can any be his ministers or stewards of the mysteries of God, but those he thus aids, and qualifies, and they may be learned or unlearned, as in his wisdom he may see meet to call and ordain; and others, to say the softest word I can for them, are but vain deceiving intruders; therefore I must say it is with amazement and concern that I see one, that professeth himself a steward of the mysteries of God, so profoundly ignorant of them, as to suppose and teach that human learning can furnish a man with the knowledge of them.

I am no Sectarian, but believe that in every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, they that fear God, and work righteousness, are accepted of him; but as thou hast denominated itinerant preachers of every denomination ignorant; Methodists, Enthusiasts, Anabaptists, and Dissenters, as persons whom the inhabitants of Oxford have not the smallest proof of, I would put thee in mind that some itinerant preachers in former times, that were not very learned, had knowledge taken of them, that they had been with Jesus. Acts, iv. 13. "When they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived
"that

“ that they were unlearned and ignorant men,
 “ they marvelled and took knowledge of them,
 “ that they had been with Jesus.” Now these
 were not university or learning made ministers;
 so the learned ministers of that time, that knew
 not the power of God, opposed them, as thou
 dost in this; but their answer was, “ Whether
 “ it be right in the sight of God to hearken
 “ unto you, more than unto God, judge ye.”

I hope thou wilt now acknowledge I have
 fairly tried thy spirit by the Scriptures, and that
 I have found it very opposite to them; therefore
 it must be the very antichrist against which John
 cautioned all true Christians to the world's end:
 nor can such that are so, subscribe to thy spiri-
 tual abilities, for thy doctrines carry so much
 carnality in them, that to me they seem to mi-
 nister death, as Paul saith the carnal mind doth.
 I believe that no wise or good man sets learning
 at defiance, or holds science in contempt; for
 my own part, I wish I had more of it, as I never
 learnt my native tongue grammatically, there-
 fore I hold neither learning nor science in
 contempt, as learning and science, but be-
 lieve them useful both for pleasure and pro-
 fit; but when they are made the ground of qua-
 lification for gospel ministry, then I believe in
 that point of view all wise and good men hold
 them in contempt, as Saul did, who was pos-
 sessed of a large share of them, as thou mayest
 see in Philippians iii. 8. Thy fallacy, or igno-
 rance, or both, is most obvious in that thou de-

clarest thy belief is that the scriptures are the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world; when the scriptures themselves declare the direct contrary, and say that the Word that took flesh and dwelt amongst men, which was Christ, was the true light, that lighteth every man that cometh into the world; as may be seen in John's declaration of the gospel, chap. i. 9. What perversion of scripture is this! John told the primitive Christians they knew all things, through the teaching of the Divine Unction, which they had received by Christ, the true light; 1 Epist. John ii. 26, 27, "*These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but, as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lye: and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him:*" but thou seemest, notwithstanding thy learning, to be in the state that Caiaphas told his and thy brethren they were in, when in the council they had called to consult what they should do against Christ and his itinerant ministers, they being the ruling and beneficed clergy of that time: what he told them was, that they knew nothing at all; and that seems to be the case with thee, that thy ignorance should exalt the scriptures into the place of Christ! If this is not antichrist and false doctrine, I know not what is; for although there is a spirit in man, it is the inspiration of the Almighty that giveth it

it an understanding, as thou mayest read in Job xxxii. 8; and if it was not for this inspiration, how could the scriptures possibly be understood, or the people be qualified to judge of spiritual things; for they are only spiritually discerned by the illuminating virtue of this inspiring power of the Sun of Righteousness, which ariseth with healing in his wings to those that fear his name, Malachi iv. 2. Indeed the carnal preacher may make representations of them, but cannot give the people the living experience of it, no more than a limner can give the dead representation of a man or woman animal life. May I not therefore with great propriety apply that scripture to thee, Mark xii. 24. "And Jesus answering said unto them, Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of God?" This may seem plain dealing, but truth calls for it, and the nature of the case requires it, therefore count me not an enemy but a friend, because I tell thee the truth.

In page 12 thou warnest the people to beware of false prophets; but of what class thou art, I will leave the witness for God in thy own heart to judge, for judgment is not mine but his; yet he hath given us a criterion by which we may judge some things; "For by their fruits," said he, "ye shall know them:" and I am persuaded the spiritual eye can as clearly as the natural one discern that men do not gather grapes of thorns nor figs of thistles. The scriptures thou hast
quoted

quoted are well chosen, but misapplied, page 12; for they revert back, if the above conclusions are true, and apply strictly to him that I am writing to; therefore I intreat of thee to adopt that part of thy church service in sincerity of heart, and address it to him who hath all men's in his power, that he may cleanse thine by the inspiration of his holy spirit; for there is no other way that it can possibly be done. I conclude with thee that to judge of the secret spring and principles of the heart, and of those motives that lay buried within the breast, is indeed a difficult and delicate task; and that false teachers are to be tried by the rule that Christ hath given us, I also subscribe to, and for that reason have followed his rule in trying thee, believing that rule a solemn duty of religion, and that the fruits of the spirits of men and women that are real members of his church are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. Now I would have thee ask thyself which of these fruits stimulated thee to compose thy sermon suitable to the times; but I think a very unsuitable thing to appear in the christian world; for if I have a right favour, it doth not seem to relish of any one of them, but its composition seems to derive its original from just the opposite, viz. hatred, variance, emulation, wrath, strife, sedition, heresies, &c. I think it somewhat possesseth the spirit of Pashur, the son of Immer the priest, when he smote Jeremiah, and put him in the stocks; in
which

which act I can perceive no love, and therefore not a fruit of the Divine Spirit, though it was said of him that he was a governor in the house of the Lord; and some say thou art so too. Pure and disinterested love flows in my soul to thee at this very instant, which gives me to hope that my labour here will not be altogether in vain, in the Lord. I wish not to meddle with politics in state affairs; but am of the judgment that the calumnies and odiums thou hast thrown on the Dissenters and others, are neither just nor true, for I believe that though there may be some disaffected persons in all dissenting societies, yet I believe their numbers are but very small compared with the whole; and their designs by no means what thou representest. For my own part, I can say I have no wish for any other form of government but monarchical; nor have I any acquaintance that do; or why we should, I do not see; as the British throne hath now for more than a century been filled with mild and gentle kings, though I know that it is the mind of many, that a reform in the government would be a great benefit to the state. Thou, and I suppose most people in the nation, do know that many of the established clergy, and people, are avowedly inimical to the present government; but I hope divine mercy will preserve us from anarchy, confusion, and disorder. But before I drop this, I may say, that one great reason why the people are not so well satisfied with the government is, because they continue

nue that grievous, oppressive, and antichristian burthen of tythes to support men, that they are perswaded are not by any divine law heirs to any such inheritance; and now I may simply say what my faith is, that the Lord will sweep away both them and their receivers together. And here I drop that head.

I cannot subscribe to the church of England being the apostolic and holy catholic church, yet I believe that many of her members are members of the church which is so, according to the light and knowledge that they have received; by which they have come beyond her forms and ceremonies, to be partakers of that inward and spiritual grace of which all must be partakers: as it is that alone by which all that enter into her communion know their initiation, and its power as far to excel the outward and visible sign, as light doth darkness. And I believe there are in all church communions, persons of this class; and that such persons make up the truly catholic and apostolic church all the world over, that are led by the Spirit of God into all their religious exercises, and no other: for he told Peter that his church should be built upon that rock, which was the revelation of his Father's Spirit, and that the gates of hell should not prevail against it: nor is it possible they should, as he hath promised to be with it even to the end of the world. Now thou knowest what my faith is about the church, its foundation, and its members.

As

As to the spirits thou speakest of, that are abroad in the world, that would deprive us of our happiness; I am unacquainted with any such, therefore shall let them alone: but the scriptures thou hast referred us to, to try them by, revert back upon thyself; thy doctrine being exactly that which constitutes thee to be the man that is not of God; for the man that is of God says, that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, and he is that anointing or unction in man that taught and doth teach all that will learn of him, what the will of God, and their duty towards him is: but thou sayest it is the scriptures that enlighten every man coming into the world: but I would ask thee how the Gentiles were enlightened by them, that never had them? and yet they testify that the Gentiles that never had them, nor any other outward law, were a law unto themselves; which shewed the works of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing them witness, &c. Rom. ii. 14, 15. The prophet Isaiah, under the Old Testament dispensation, had a more perfect knowledge of Christ, his work and office, than thou seemest to have under the New, although a professed master in Israel; for he declared in prophecy that God the Father would send Christ the anointed to be a leader and a commander of the people: and in chap. xlii. 6, 7. speaking of him and what he was to effect in and for them that believe in, and receive him, and not the scriptures only, though they are a true and

D

faithful

faithful revelation and declaration of him; "I
 " the Lord have called thee in righteousness, I
 " will hold thy hand, and will keep thee, and
 " give thee for a covenant of the people, for a
 " light of the Gentiles, to open the blind eyes,
 " to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and
 " them that sit in darkness out of the prison-
 " house." Chap. xlix. 6, 7. " And he said, it is
 " a light thing that thou shouldst be my servant,
 " to raise up the tribes of Jacob, I will give thee
 " for a light of the Gentiles, that thou mayest
 " be my salvation unto the ends of the earth;
 " thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the Redeemer of
 " Israel, and his Holy One, to him whom man
 " despiseth, to him whom the nations abhorreth,
 " to a servant of rulers, kings shall see and
 " arise, princes shall also worship, because of
 " the Lord which is faithful, and the Holy One
 " of Israel, and he shall choose thee."

I might quote most part of the scriptures that
 speaks of him, to shew the fallacy and absurdity
 of thy doctrine; but I wish to have done: but
 thou appearest to me to be the person that would
 deprive us of our happiness in this world, by
 blowing the fire of contention and animosity
 amongst the people; and I believe in my heart, if
 we were to follow the divinity doctrine advanced
 in thy Sermon, we should be bereaved of our
 salvation in the next, as the scriptures declare,
 Philip. ii. 9, 10, 11. " Wherefore God hath
 " highly exalted him, and given him a name

" which is above every name, that at the name
 " of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in
 " heaven, and things on earth, and things under
 " the earth; and that every tongue shall confess
 " that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God
 " the Father." And again, Acts v. 31. " Him
 " hath God exalted to be a prince and a Saviour,
 " to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness
 " of sins:" but EDWARD TATHAM hath exalted
 the scriptures, and his brethrens commentaries,
 &c. on them, into the place of Christ, in saying
 they are the true light that enlighteneth every
 man coming into the world; which abundantly
 confirmeth me in what I have long believed,
 and have some time since advanced; and that
 is, that all systematick preaching is an idol of
 human composition, and that by which the peo-
 ple in too general a way are made to trust in a
 lie, as may be seen in Jeremiah xxiii. 14. " I
 " have seen also in the prophets of Jeru-
 " salem an horrible thing, they commit adul-
 " tery, and walk in lies; they strengthen also
 " the hands of the evil doers, that none doth
 " turn from his wickedness; they are all of them
 " unto me as Sodom, and the inhabitants there-
 " of as Gomorrah." Ver. 21. " I have not sent
 " these prophets, yet they run. I have not
 " spoken unto them, yet they have prophesied."
 Ver. 32. " Behold, I am against them that pro-
 " phesy false dreams, saith the Lord, and do tell
 " them, and cause my people to err by their
 " lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them

"not, nor commanded them, therefore they
 "shall not profit this people at all, saith the
 "Lord." Isaiah iii. and last part of the 12th
 verse, "Oh! my people, they that lead thee
 "cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy
 "paths." And again, lvi. 9, 10, 11, 12. "All
 "the beasts in the field come to devour, yea
 "all the beasts in the forests; his watchmen are
 "blind, they are all ignorant, they are all dumb
 "dogs, they cannot bark; lying down, loving to
 "slumber; yea, they are greedy dogs, that can
 "never have enough, and they are shepherds
 "that cannot understand; they all look to their
 "own way, every one for his gain from his
 "quarter. Come ye, say they, I will fetch
 "wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong
 "drink, and to-morrow shall be as this day, and
 "much more abundant." I shall now leave it
 with thee to contrast things of that and the pre-
 sent time, as I wish to avoid comparisons and
 reflections, as much as I can, with justice to the
 cause I am engaged in. But give me leave to
 quote two more verses, Malachi ii. 8, 9. "But
 "ye are departed out of the way; ye have
 "caused many to stumble at the law, ye have
 "corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the
 "Lord of Hosts; therefore also have I made
 "you contemptible and base before all the
 "people, according as ye have not kept my
 "ways, but have been partial in the laws." If
 the tenor of thy Sermon had run parallel with
 a truth thou advancest towards the close, I be-
 lieve

lieve I should not have made any observations on it. The truth I allude to is, thy asserting the divinity of Christ, and unity with the godhead, as co-eternal with the Father before the world was; for truly he was God manifest in the flesh for man's redemption; being as the prophet speaks concerning him, *Isaiah xlii. 11.* "I, even
 "I am the Lord, and beside me there is no
 "Saviour." chap. *xlv. 21.* "Who hath declared
 "this from ancient time? who hath told it from
 "that time? have not I, the Lord; and there
 "is no God beside me. Look unto me and be
 "saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God
 "and there is none other."

Knowing that all the help of man is vain, therefore I have long ceased from man, and all his carnal ordinances, which to me seem to be devised by the evil one, to support his kingdom under a false appearance; they being only images of righteousness, but have no degree of the life of righteousness in them; though acted under that mask and character, by which the hearts of the simple are the more easily deceived, and have been practised by men as things of a divine nature for filthy lucre sake; therefore I came out from among them and was separated in obedience to the divine command, that I may have no Father in God but him. *2 Corinthians, vi. 17, 18.* "Wherefore come out from amongst
 "them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and
 "touch not the unclean things, and I will re-
 "ceive

"ceive you, and I will be a father unto you,
 "and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith
 "the Lord Almighty."

Thy chain of arguing, in page 17, breathes but little or no charity; and thou knowest what Paul says to those that do not possess it, 1 Corinthians, xiii. 1. "Though I speak with
 "the tongue of men or angels, and have not
 "charity, I am become as sounding brags or a
 "tinkling cymbal." But I charitably hope and trust there are but few, if any, men professing Christianity, that can subscribe to such a creed as thou hast compiled for them; yet I must with sorrow acknowledge there is too much Deism in the world: and do believe it hath had its birth, from time to time, from such Sermons as one that was read in Oxford in the year 1792, under the title of "A Sermon suitable to the Times." I would have all men fear God, and honour the King as his minister; but I do not believe that this will secure our happiness, either in this world or in the world to come: for by this means the rankest Deist upon earth may attain to heaven, if fearing God and honouring the king, would secure it for him.

In page 18 thou addresshest thy audience as follows: "The conduct, my brethren, which will
 "secure your happiness, both in this world and
 "the next, is prescribed in one short command
 "of Holy Scripture, Fear God and honour the
 "king." Could the rankest Deist upon earth
 preach

preach a doctrine more opposite to the doctrines of Christianity, than this of thine is? And if thy heart believes what thy mouth hath uttered, thou must be one of those very men thy creed in page 17 suits. I am sorry that darkness hath so veiled thy mind; but it is a common proverb, That there is nothing blinder than prejudice. I would have thee write no more, or else with more congruity and a Christian spirit, and not upon the broad scale of censuring and condemning all societies of people but thy own; nor as a fawning sycophant pursue court favours, Amaziah like, Amos vii. 10, 11, 12, 13, "Then Amaziah, the priest of Bethel," (shall I say, EDWARD TATHAM, priest of Oxford) "sent to Jeroboam, king of Israel, saying, Amos hath conspired against thee in the
 "midst of the house of Israel: the land is not
 "able to bear all his words, for thus Amos
 "saith, that Jeroboam shall die by the sword,
 "and all Israel shall surely be led away captive
 "out of their own land. Also Amaziah said
 "unto Amos, O, thou Seer, go, flee away
 "into the land of Judah, and there eat bread,
 "and prophesy there, but prophesy not any
 "more at Bethel, for it is the king's chapel,
 "and it is the king's court." Under the law, if a thief had stolen any thing, and had not wherewith of his own to make restitution to the owner for that which he had stolen, he was to be sold, and so restitution was to be made out of the money that was took for him: now what restitution canst

canst thou make for the injuries thou hast done by insinuation and direct charges, in thy sermon, against Methodist, Enthusiast, Anabaptist, and Dissenter, indiscriminately? For surely thou hast by false declarations in thy Sermon robbed thousands of people that are classed under the above denominations of their good names and loyalty, that I believe are more so than their denouncer, if a fair investigation of the matter was to take place.

But let me conclude with saying, I believe what thou sayest the apostle tells us, is a truth, which is, that false teachers are deceivers; and I am persuaded if EDWARD TATHAM candidly and impartially peruses this, he will clearly perceive who is one. 7 AP 59

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